

Approved For Release 1999/09/02 : CIA-RDP79-01194A000100690001-0

Approved For Release 1999/09/02 : CIA-RDP79-01194A000100690001-0

NEW STATESMAN
Vol 67 No 2246
Published weekly at Great Turnstile,
London WC1V 7JH Tel: 01-405 8471
© 1974
The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd

Annual Subscriptions

By surface mail to any address in the world £8.50

By air to:
North America \$28, Europe, Middle East £10.25
Israel £9.75, S. America, Africa, India £11.50
South Africa £11.25, Australasia, Far East £12.50

Payment may be made by sterling or dollar cheque, by international money order or to our Post Office Giro account 502 1014. Rates for six months are pro rata.

Second class postage paid at New York NY

drawn from the mass organisations in the

By 1970 the army was the dominant power throughout local and provincial politics, far more powerful than the sickly new party which, in most areas, was being painfully rebuilt from the carcass of the old. Altogether it was perhaps unsurprising that at the 9th party congress in 1969 the PLA should have been given 45 per cent of all Central Committee seats and 12 out of 25 places on the Politburo. The PLA's manifesto, written by Mao and published in 1947, declares: 'We are the troops led by the great Communist Party of China. Provided we constantly observe the directives of the party, we will win.' The problem arises, as Snow pointed out, when there are divisions in the party, for these are inevitably reflected in the army too. The party leadership, as we know, has not always been united since the Cultural Revolution started.

It was perhaps here then Lin Piao began to go wrong. But if the social power of the PLA and its chief representative, Lin Piao, had been enhanced by the Cultural Revolution, its military effectiveness had been impaired. (Production losses, after all, had hit military supplies as much as anything else.) Nothing demonstrated the martial limits of the army more starkly than the border clashes with the Soviet Union in 1969. The Russians had apparently made a close study of US helicopter tactics in Vietnam: they literally flew circles around the bewildered Chinese. Their tanks and their artillery were far more accurate and effective than anything the PLA could put up; China just did not have the hardware essential to a response. The battles are generally thought to have had a significant effect on a leadership still unrecovered from the uncertainties of the Cultural Revolution.

But by 1969 the military threat from the Soviets seemed so much greater than that from the US had ever been that most of the party's leaders, including Mao and Chou, decided they would have to take seriously Nixon's promise to end the Vietnam war and his first tentative overtures to Peking. Détente with Washington would provide not only strategic protection but also essential technological help. One Western ambassador in Peking explains that Chou, with Mao behind him, 'had the vision of the necessary transformation. Till the end of the Sixties China was isolated from the outside, kept going simply by moral exhortation. Chou was adopting the position taken by the 19th-century mandarin Chang Chih-tung who said: "We must take Chinese teaching as the fundamental essence and Western teaching for practical use." Not everyone agreed with him.'

The chief dissenter was apparently Lin Piao, the Minister of Defence and Mao's heir designate. It is now said that Lin was

William Shawcross

CPYRGHTThe Errors of Lin Piao

Dictatorship by any class has to rule by violence... Marxists even praise, far from opposing, revolutionary violence, which conforms to the trend of historical development. - *Red Flag*, December.

Whoever you are, however senior your official position, if you do not conform to Mao Tse-tung thought, if you do not follow Mao Tse-tung's revolutionary line, we shall strongly resist and struggle against you vigorously. - *People's Daily*, 27 March.

Chairman Mao has many concerns: that the revolutionary purity of the party, as exemplified during its Yenan period and the spartan conditions of civil and anti-Japanese war be retained - or restored; that an energetic and united collective leadership should succeed him; that the results of the Cultural Revolution should be consolidated, not squandered; that everything be done to avoid the Sovietisation of China, either by military conquest or by the more subtle introduction of 'revisionism' into Chinese society. Summed up, his concerns are that China should remain Maoist. Whether or not the Chairman now feels a greater sense of urgency than ever before, they are what this campaign to criticise Lin Piao and criticise Confucius is about. To say much more you have to be a China-watcher.

The present campaign can really be seen only in the context of the successes and failures of the Cultural Revolution. The chaos and bloodshed of 1966-68 succeeded by destroying the party, by forcing cadres to labour in the fields, by having management work on the floor, by sending high-school graduates out into the borders rather than straight into university and into an elite class of intellectuals, in ending much of the rigidity and class divisions in Chinese society. For all the claims of the present campaign, China today is far more fluid and far less 'revisionist' or 'capitalist' (in terms of the Soviet model) than it was in 1965.

But the Cultural Revolution also created problems which remained unsolved when the Lin Piao-Confucius campaign began. Production suffered terribly during those years and the country lost with it

a lot of administrative talent which it could ill afford, as older cadres fell victim to denunciations, sometimes careerist and opportunistic, from those below them: 70 per cent of the Central Committee were either purged or severely criticised and thereby rendered ineffective. One of the possible conflicts in the leadership today is over the attempt to restore to power some of those who were unfairly dismissed. Lin Piao is being attacked, remember, for 'restoration of rites' and that can embrace anyone or anything not actually current.

The second and larger problem was that posed by the one bureaucratic victor of the Cultural Revolution - the People's Liberation Army. Already by 1967 the army was the only institution which had survived the chaos and which could still act as a cohesive force in society. Indeed, Mao had to call on its first officer, Lin Piao, to restore order - by force if force was required (it often was) - and to 'support industry, support agriculture, support the masses of the Left, establish military control and ideological training'. In the last resort it was only the army which enabled Mao eventually to control the waves on which he had blown. In August 1967, soon after Chou En-lai had barely persuaded the Red Guards not to seize him and the Central Government's files, it was Lin Piao who was asked to start suppressing the Red Guard movement.

In 1970 Chou En-lai told Edgar Snow that the army had suffered 'hundreds of thousands' of casualties during the Cultural Revolution before it succeeded in ending the fighting and other factionalism. Altogether 2 million 'Maoist activists' were drawn from the PLA for this purpose and to help set up the new 'revolutionary committees' which were to take over the managements of every enterprise after the Cultural Revolution. These committees were and still are, selected according to the 'three-in-one alliance' - one third of their members are supposed to be soldiers, one third cadres or officials, and one third

even more impressed than his colleagues by the military might the Soviets had shown. It seems he argued that the Cultural Revolution had so weakened the Chinese economy and therefore the army that Peking just could not afford to take a tough line with Moscow. One account has it that he was induced to go along with the Washington connection only if it was paralleled by a secret détente with the Kremlin.

Everyone in China today will tell you that on 19 October 1969 (the day before the Sino-Soviet border talks began in Peking) Lin Piao wrote out, in his room, quotes from Confucius. Among them were 'Restrain yourself' and 'Restore the Rites'. One of the posters in the Canton bicycle factory echoes the *People's Daily* when it declares that Lin Piao's Confucius quotes 'clearly show his vicious ambition to subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism'. Given Mao's opinion of Soviet society and his fear that a détente with Moscow would lead to the Sovietisation of China, such an accusation has a certain logic.

But Lin Piao would have been justified in feeling some qualms about using capitalism to save Maoism from revisionism. The logic of the Nixon visit and the inflow of Western tourists and technology that has followed is deeply disturbing to a people who have long been so isolated and who have made 'self-reliance' such a basic principle of life, let alone foreign policy. One of the purposes of the present campaign is to stop people slipping into dependence.

Asked for examples of Confucian influence in the Shanghai truck factory, Comrade Wu Fung replies: 'Liu Shao-chi said we should import foreign cars, not build them in China. That's worship of foreign capital.' In the Canton bicycle factory, Comrade Ching Chai explains that one example of Lin Piao's influence in the plant occurred when 'a group of technicians here refused to take the mass line and ask worker advice as to how to build an electroplating machine. Instead, they locked themselves up and studied plans of Western machines. The one they produced was hopelessly unsuitable to our conditions. Just because they had not consulted the workers.' In Peking a senior trade official explains China's import policy: 'We won't import what we don't need. China will industrialise at its own pace. We won't do anything to harm the policy of self-reliance. For example we import aircraft not only for flying but also to increase our knowledge of their manufacture. Imports of technology do not go against the policy of self-reliance.'

But, however intense the propaganda, the new contact with foreigners is bound to be unsettling. There are now Chinese tech-

There are 200 Chinese learning English in Britain, 200 more in France. American technicians have been to the Taching oil-fields in Manchuria, those are German and Dutch engineers in many different areas and dozens of tourists arrive every day. They are all treated with exceptional courtesy, they stay in expensive and secluded hotels, they have their own guides assigned them, they are driven around in their own cars or buses; inevitably their special treatment causes some popular resentment. After all, the only contact that many Chinese have had with foreign industry is the hideous exploitation they suffered in British-owned and other sweat-shops.

It is in this context that the present campaign has developed since the party congress in August. The congress took place with a call from *Red Flag*, the party's official journal, for 'a revolution in the superstructure'. It began with a cut in the political power of the army at the centre -- reducing its share of the Central Committee from 45 per cent to 33.4 per cent and its numbers on the Politburo from 12 to 7 out of 25. In January the PLA's provincial influence was cut when nine regional commanders were moved from the semi-independent kingdoms they had constructed over the years. As a further put-down to the political power of the army, no new Minister of Defence was named.

The session was quietly dominated by Chou En-lai, but the mistake of 1969 was not repeated -- no single successor to Mao was endorsed. Instead a genuinely collective leadership was created just below the Chairman. Into it climbed Wang Hung-wen, a 38-year-old Shanghai firebrand who had burst into prominence during the Cultural Revolution in Shanghai, China's most revolutionary city. His promotion would have been remarkable only for his age -- the average age of the Politburo is 67. With Wang came Chang Chun-chiao, often described as another prominent member of the 'Shanghai radical mafia'. These two, together with Mrs Mao -- Chang Ching, whose hand is seen behind the present upheavals in culture -- are said to form the vanguard of 'leftist' members of the party.

But if so they were balanced by the return of many cadres disgraced during the Cultural Revolution. These three years had caused an enormous drain on administrative skills which, unlike zeal, cannot simply be invoked. The leadership has apparently decided that there comes a level of management at which ideological assertions just do not replace administrative knowledge. Last year saw the rehabilitation of some 60 former Central Committee members who were denounced and dismissed during the Cultural Revolution. Prominent among them was Teng Hsiao-ping -- once second

subject of popular disgust -- who was rehabilitated last April and raised to the Politburo in January.

The trouble with these labels of 'moderate', 'radical' and 'rightist' is that we have very little idea what they mean in terms of policy. It is entirely reasonable to suppose that tensions might develop between those now restored to power and those who climbed there by denouncing them. And there is no reason to imagine that members of the Politburo do not, like members of most other governments, have policy differences. For instance, it may be that the 'radicals' don't really want to be bothered by the strategic considerations of foreign policy -- they are concerned only with its effect on Chinese society. But from this to the current China-watchers' orthodoxy that the leadership now contains the moderates led by Chou, the unidentified pro-Soviet Lin Piaoists, and the radicals who are out to get Chou, is a very great leap indeed.

At the congress it was Wang who stated what has since become the keynote of the new campaign at the popular level -- that there had been backsliding since the Cultural Revolution and that petty-bourgeois tendencies had been allowed to creep back. He recalled Mao's theory of the need for perpetual revolution because 'every seven or eight years monsters and demons will jump up themselves'. It is in this spirit that the popular level of the campaign (described in the previous article, NS 29 March) has developed.

The first attacks on Confucius, whose philosophy of ordered organisation has certainly had a very profound and largely conservative effect on Chinese society for 2,000 years, began before the congress, but Lin Piao did not emerge as his spiritual successor and the real villain of the moment until autumn had chilled into Peking winter. This chronology led some China-watchers to speculate that the attack on Confucius had begun as an attack by the radicals against Chou (many of the early articles appeared in Shanghai) but that Chou had subsequently taken it over and redirected it towards Lin Piao (it was in Peking papers that the Lin Piao-Confucius link was first forged).

This could be true. It could equally well be true that Chou has masterminded the whole campaign from the start. It is also possible that he is about to be destroyed by it. We do not really know. Among China-watchers there tends to be clear territorial division of opinion on Chou's present position: in Hong Kong they fear for his future and consider he is under increasingly severe attack, especially from such 'radicals' as Mrs Mao; in Peking diplomats and journalists tend to think he is in control of the movement. There is, however, agreement

that if Chou is under attack, then it is at least partly for the way in which the Washington connection has developed and especially Nixon's failure really to reduce his commitment to Taiwan or to end the war in Indochina.

One Peking-based diplomat declares: 'I think perhaps the only real opposition to Chou now is in the PLA and at a provincial level. The army is still very upset by the changes in January which destroyed a lifetime of concentrating power.'

The confusion engendered by arcane attacks on provincial operas, by the unusual attention paid recently to Chiang Ching, by the fact that Chou En-lai himself has begun to complain to visitors that he is 'disappointed' by some aspects of the new American relationship, and especially by the hyperbolic assaults on as yet unnamed enemies in senior positions: all this suggests a state of total flux in Chinese politics which could cause an upheaval as great as that of the Cultural Revolution.

But there are still many constants. Chief among them are the political and the military threats of 'Soviet capitalism'. Certainly the enlistment of Nixon as a buffer against those threats is traumatic for many Chinese, and the attacks on 'bourgeois influences' - like Beethoven - can be seen as a sop to such criticism. Mao has deliberately installed a coalition to survive him and it would be absurd to expect that such a coalition should not contain differences of opinion. At a priestly level the present campaign reflects some of them. It reflects also Mao's lifelong conviction that the purity of the Revolution cannot be maintained without periodic upheaval. Most Chinese now alive have not been through

the fire of Liberation: they know nothing of the struggles of civil war. Mao has always believed that if conditions of adversity do not exist, then they must be invented. Out of chaos comes strength; out of calm, complacency.

The campaign reflects too the difficulties of reconciling the need for an element in the administrative sector which can take full advantage of the imports of Western technology with the need to prevent an elitist management class from emerging. It reflects the different and sometimes apparently contradictory ways in which the Soviet military and political threats have to be countered.

The campaign will certainly produce a purge at some level. But few people in China say they think it will involve such violent disruptions as the Cultural Revolution. They tell you that the present movement is designed only to consolidate the achievements of 1966-69. But there are already scattered reports of fighting in Wuhan and Hangchow, party officials were last week attacked by name for the first time and the *People's Daily* declared: 'Long Live the Revolutionary Violence.' The present campaign is another stage in the Chinese Revolution and very few people in China itself have much idea how it will develop. Although the Chinese don't flash the Little Red Book too much nowadays they can read in it what Mao said in 1927: 'A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery: it cannot be so refined, so leisurely, and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous and magnanimous. A revolution is an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.' The Revolution continues still.